

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

CHECK-LIST OF BIRDS OF THE WORLD, Vol. 7. By James Lee Peters, Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass., 1951: 6 × 9 in., x + 319 pp. Price \$6.00; no discount.

Apart from the small Old World family Eurylaimidae (the broadbills), of which 8 genera and 14 species are recognized, the seventh volume of Peters' monumental check-list of the birds of the world, the publication of which has now been taken over by the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, is devoted entirely to neotropical families of the superfamily Furnarioidea, including the wood-hewers (Dendrocolaptidae), ovenbirds (Furnariidae), ant-thrushes (Formicariidae), ant-pipits (Conopophagidae) and tapaculos (Rhinocryptidae). No species in this group has been recorded from North America north of México.

Since these New World families were monographed by the late eminent ornithologist Dr. C. E. Hellmayr less than 30 years ago, a comparison of the two works is pertinent. Important changes include the elimination of subfamilies, a decrease in the number of species (527 vs. 540), and a great increase in the number of recognized forms (1581 vs. 1163). Several genera have been removed from the Formicariidae, *Melanopareia* being placed in the Rhinocryptidae, while *Psilorhamphus*, in addition to *Ramphocaenus* and *Microbates*, are referred to the Sylviidae. Of the genera we note that "*Dendroplex*" is merged with *Xiphorhynchus*, "*Dendrophylax*" with *Leptasthenura*, "*Drioclistes*" with *Phacellodomus*, "*Microxenops*" with *Xenops*, "*Apocryptornis*" with *Grallaricula*. Six genera (*Ochetorhynchus*, *Spartonoica*, *Hellmayrea*, *Gyalophylax*, *Roraimia*, and *Simoxenops*) are added to the Furnariidae, two (*Xenornis* and *Myrmophylax*) to the Formicariidae.

This reviewer is impressed not only with the standard of accuracy and attention to details characteristic of Peters' work, but also with his conservative taxonomic treatment in contrast with the works of certain other authors.—James Bond.

BIRD PORTRAITS. By J. C. Harrison, with an introduction by Seton Gordon. Country Life Limited, London, and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1950: 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., 119 pp., with 16 color plates and numerous reproductions of pencil drawings. \$12.50.

J. C. Harrison deserves to be far better known in America than he is, for he is one of the most gifted bird artists of our times. Anyone who has worked hard at drawing birds can tell at a glance from the many illustrations in this book how patiently Harrison has studied his models. No one but a very thorough observer would give a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaëtos*) the particular head-shape shown at the lower left on p. 17, or an Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*) the peculiarly ungraceful lumpiness which makes the sketches on p. 35 so beautiful and authentic.

Of special interest are the drawings of the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) on pp. 20 and 21. Several of these, especially Nos. 6 and 7, seem a trifle too heavy-winged or heavy-bodied; but Harrison's work is so dependable on the whole that we cannot help wondering whether our American Osprey may be more slender of wing than the European bird. Such a sub-specific difference would be quite possible. Two figures shown on p. 20 are, incidentally, wrongly identified: No. 1 is a Golden Eagle and No. 3 an Osprey, rather than *vice versa*.

For several reasons the pencil sketches are an especially valuable part of the book. They have great appeal *per se*, for they are drawn directly, they are not fussed over at all, and they are full of life. Even the most meager outlines have character and charm. Some of the duck and grebe drawings on p. 83 and the ptarmigan on pp. 96 and 97 are especially good. A notable fact about all these pencil sketches is that they graphically report on natural history as well as on the beauty, strength, and poise of birds. Note in this connection the sketches of Monta-